



# **FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

**(RECRUITMENT & HIRING/RESOURCES/REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION)**

## **DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH**

**October is “National disability Employment Awareness Month.”  
What does this mean exactly?**

### **- NATIONAL:**

This initiative began a Public Law 176, passed by Congress in 1945 in the wake of massive post-WW II workforce changes. There was, understandably, a giant gap in the supply of workers and the country needed to figure out for the first time how to employ people with disabilities on a large scale just to meet national production demands.

### **- DISABILITY:**

Of course, it wasn't originally referred to as “National Disability Employment Awareness”; it went by the title of “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week”. Shifting attitudes throughout the Seventies and Eighties led eventually to expanding “National Employ the Handicapped Week” (Physically” had been dropped in the Sixties) to the full month of October and changing its name to its current string of capitalized qualifiers.

### **- EMPLOYMENT:**

In 1990, in the largest ceremony ever held on the White House Lawn, President George Bush signed into law the “Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)”. Title I of the ADA took effect in 1992, finally officially prohibiting employment discrimination in recruitment, interviewing, hiring and advancement on the basis of disability. People with disabilities finally received equal access to employment for the first time in the country’s history.

### **- AWARENESS:**

Employees with disabilities are no small part of the workforce: 30+ million working-age people with disabilities contribute to both the national economy and the bottom lines of individual corporations every day. They are not hoping to be given “special consideration” or “assignments commensurate with their abilities”; they want the chance to show their full potential on the same footing as their co-workers and to be judged on the merits of the work they do, just like anyone else.

### **- MONTH:**

October has become the kick-off month for year-round programs that highlight and support the abilities, skills and fundamental equality of all persons with disabilities. It’s a time not just for this particular group to feel pride in their achievements, but a time for the entire nation to recognize these accomplishments and realize that they’ve enhanced all aspects of our collective society.